



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

2008 Army Earth Day Message

Earth Day, April 22, is an opportunity for the United States Army to reassert our belief that a strong, healthy environment is important for protecting our future. And just as the Army is working to restore balance to the force, we must also ensure that environment maintains its balance.

For all of the advances mankind made in the 20th Century, it has become increasingly clear that we borrowed heavily against our environmental future. Environmental threats, such as climate change, are impacting areas of the world least capable of absorbing these shocks. The harm will not, however, be so limited. It will be worldwide. The potential devastation caused by climate change impacts human, economic, and environmental security. Desertification, water shortages, flooding, and sustained droughts are examples of environmental change that force populations to take desperate measures, thereby adding to the instability of fragile states and fueling persistent conflict.

Our goal is to reduce the Army's "boot print" on the Earth. We are doing this by increasing environmental awareness and implementing "sustainability" – a strategy that uses sound business and environmental practices to link our activities today to those of tomorrow. On our installations, we are instituting sustainability planning to protect our ranges and training areas, building energy conservation into our housing and military construction, and reducing our impacts from industrial processes. Overseas, our deployed troops are using insulation in temporary buildings and constructing more advanced net-zero structures to increase energy efficiency. We are also focusing on renewable energy technologies – such as solar, wind, and waste-to-energy – to assess the potential for powering electronic communication systems, water purification systems, and to reduce the frequency of fuel convoys. Furthermore, the Army is introducing fuel-saving hybrid engines for the Future Combat Systems.

Thanks to the efforts of our Soldiers, Families, Army Civilians, and contractors, the Army earned in 2007 the prestigious "White House Closing the Circle Award" for being a national leader in sustaining the environment.

However, our work is not yet done. To achieve our goal of minimizing the Army's "boot print" requires the continued personal commitment from every member of the Army team. The Army observes Earth Day as an opportunity for reflection and re-dedication to being good stewards of our planet – and for a more secure future.

To be Army Green is to be Army Strong!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Geren", is positioned above the name.

Pete Geren